



Exotic pest

- Native to Europe and Asia
- Introduced to North America in 1869 near Boston
- Now infests Maine south to North Carolina and northwest through Wisconsin
- Eastern Wisconsin is generally, and in some cases, highly infested and counties are under quarantine

Damage

- Caterpillars feed on leaves of up to 500 species of trees and shrubs, favoring oak
- Capable of defoliating several million acres in the United States each year
- Defoliated trees grow a new set of leaves, but are weakened and may be killed by other pests

The first defoliation occurred in Wisconsin in 1999. Approximately 65,000 acres were defoliated in 2003, primarily in Marinette, Portage, and Waupaca counties. Gypsy moth populations have been low since 2004.

Impact on people

- Expense to homeowners of removing and replacing dead trees
- Potential decline in property values from tree loss
- Allergic reactions to caterpillar hair
- Nuisance of having thousands of caterpillars in the backyard

Costs to businesses

- Inspections and treatments for nursery and Christmas tree growers, timber interests, and paper companies shipping materials to non-infested areas
- Lost tourism dollars
- Environmental damage

Life cycle

- Caterpillars emerge in mid-May to early June and begin feeding
- Stop feeding and pupate, forming a cocoon-like shell in late June to mid-July
- Adult moths emerge from pupae, mate and die in mid-July to early August
- Eggs over-winter, protected in a blanket of hair from the female moth

Rapid spread

- Each female lays an average of 600 eggs
- Gypsy moths thrive in many habitats because they are not picky eaters
- Because they're not native to North America, they have few natural enemies
- Egg masses are often deposited on man-made objects and moved into new areas

**Goals of Wisconsin
Cooperative Gypsy
Moth Program**

- Reduce gypsy moth populations and help prevent defoliation
- Facilitate cost sharing for the suppression treatments
- Slow the spread of the gypsy moth in the western part of the state
- Eradicate isolated populations in the western part of the state

**For more information, call 1-800-642-MOTH
or visit Wisconsin Gypsy Moth on the Web at <http://gypsymoth.wi.gov>**